

An Economic Development Plan for the Stabilization, Diversification and Revitalization of Agriculture in Vermont

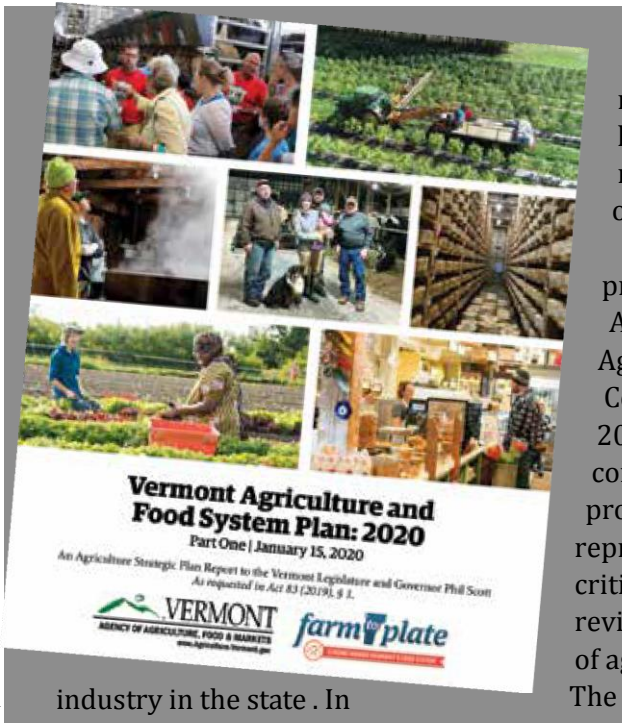
By Abbey Willard, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

There is hope for the future of agriculture in Vermont . Our state is full of land managers, makers, and entrepreneurs that are committed to producing high quality agricultural and food products, connecting with consumers, and making contributions to their communities. We have many devoted organizations, technical advisors, and engaged entities in supporting our agricultural communities and the viability of maintaining a working landscape in Vermont . Yet we are at a critical inflection point in our agricultural economy and in our farming communities .

Many agricultural industries are facing challenging times as they respond to low market prices, land

ownership transition decisions, shifting climate patterns, a need to access new markets, evolving consumer preferences, and explore new product innovation . As a small state competing in a global marketplace, we have often relied upon our strong sense of community and willingness to collaborate to remain competitive and our sense of integrity and high-quality products to set market and production trends .

In this same light, the Vermont Legislature asked the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) to collaborate with the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) last May 2019 to develop and deliver an agricultural strategic plan that offers a strategy for the stabilization, diversification, and revitalization of the agricultural



industry in the state . In response to this request under S.160 Section 1/Act 83, AAFM and VSJF embarked on a six month process to identify the key products, markets, and issues facing VT's

agriculture and offer industry-recommended suggestions on how to positively impact our rural economy and support our local food system .

That final plan was presented to the Senate Agriculture and House Agriculture and Forestry Committees on January 20, 2020. The plan was a compilation of 23 market, product, and issue briefs that represents some of the most critical topics for the stabilization, revitalization, and diversification of agriculture in Vermont . The report represented a truly

collaborative effort led by two organizations — VAAFM and VSJF; perspective from 23 lead authors with leadership and expertise in the

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AGRiVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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The View from 116 State Street

Vermont's rural communities are intricately tied to our economy, identity and way of life. At the same time, all of Vermont suffers when our farm and forestry sectors falter.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and Vermont Farm to Plate, are taking steps to build on our strengths and innovate for the future. This week the Legislature will hear a preview of the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Plan to stimulate rural economic development and bring Vermont products to people throughout the Green Mountains and beyond.

In collaboration with a wide variety of farmers, producers and business development experts, the plan asks the Agency of Agriculture to set the table for the future of rural Vermont.

Key findings include:

- Between 2007 to 2017 the Vermont Food System economic output expanded from \$7.5 billion to \$11.3 billion.
- Food manufacturing is the second largest manufacturing industry in Vermont.
- Over 64,000 Vermonters are directly employed by over 11,500 farms and food-related businesses.

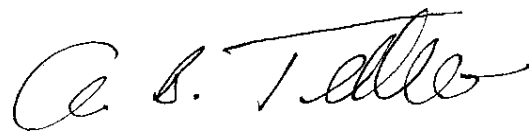
We identified key factors in growing Vermont's economy while protecting farmers and making it more affordable to do business in Vermont. The 23 topic-related briefs contained in the report address training, conservation, regional competition, marketing, innovation, planning, succession and more, demonstrating the immense opportunity to propel Vermont agriculture into a viable and sustainable future.

This economic activity is encouraging, and amid the gaps and bottlenecks the report found opportunities. We all can relate to savory Vermont cheese, crisp Vermont produce and fruit, top-of-the-line meats, a favorite Vermont brew or cider, delicious specialty, top-notch forest products and so much more.

At the same time, these monumental numbers behind the foods we love illustrate the magnitude of Vermont farmers' contribution, as well as the strength – and potential – in the Vermont food and farm industry. How do we grow others' preferences for these products?

Ultimately, this impact data illustrates the power of our rural communities, and how much more we will accomplish when we harness that power. In next steps, the report asks policy makers to research and develop recommendations to stabilize and revitalize Vermont's agricultural industry.

Now it's your turn. We invite you, private and public partners and industry leaders to review this comprehensive report and get in touch with your comments and suggestions. Collectively, as we come together with a strong vision, we can ensure Vermont's agricultural future through the 21st century.



Anson Tebbetts, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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This Month's Recipe

Maple Garlic Roast Chicken

Servings: 4-6 • Prep time: 20 minutes • Cook time: 2 hours

Ingredients:

- 1 whole (3 to 4 pound) chicken
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Ground allspice, dash
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Pepper, to taste

Instructions

- Step 1: Crush the garlic with the salt with a mortar and pestle until it forms into a paste; set aside.
- Step 2: Mix together the maple syrup, balsamic vinegar and all spice in a small bowl and set aside.
- Step 3: Clean the chicken inside and out by running it under cold water; pat dry and season inside and out with fresh ground pepper.
- Step 4: Rub the garlic paste over the chicken outside and inside of



chicken and place in a roasting pan.

- Step 5: Pour enough water to come up about a quarter inch of the bottom of roasting pan.

- Step 6: Cook in a preheated 350-degree Fahrenheit oven uncovered brushing the chicken with the maple mixture every half hour, for 2 to 2 1/2 hours

or until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the chicken and not touching the bone reads 165 degrees. (The cook time will depend on the size of the chicken).



FSMA Produce Safety Rule: Qualified Exemption Criteria and Requirements

By Dominique Giroux, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule sets national minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables. However, many produce farms in Vermont are eligible for a “qualified exemption” from the rule. Fruit and vegetable farms that are eligible for a qualified exemption need to meet minimum requirements that include keeping supporting documentation to show they meet the exemption status. This article provides information about the qualified exemption criteria, requirements, and examples of when a farm might be considered qualified exempt. The December 2019 *Agriview* article titled “Breaking Down the FSMA Produce Safety Rule: Is Your Farm Covered, Excluded, or Exempt?” may be useful to reference in conjunction with this article as it contains background and key definitions: go.usa.gov/xdacS. Please note that all URLs provided in this article are case-sensitive.

What are the qualified exemption criteria?

A produce farm must meet two requirements to be eligible for a qualified exemption under the Produce Safety Rule:

1. The farm’s annual

food sales are less than \$500,000, *averaged over the previous three years and adjusted for inflation*; AND,

2. A majority of these sales are to **qualified end-users**.

Food includes any products used for food or drink for humans or animals, including food products purchased and resold by the farm.

A qualified end-user is the consumer of the food OR a restaurant or retail food establishment located in the same state as the farm that produced the food or within 275 miles from the farm. Examples of qualified end-users may include customers at farm stands, farmers market, or community supported agriculture (CSA) members as well as restaurants, grocery stores, and food cooperatives in the same state or within 275 miles of the farm.

See go.usa.gov/xns8V for the current FMSA inflation adjusted cut offs.

What are the qualified exemption requirements?

Qualified exempt farms must follow two requirements:

1. Display at the point of purchase the name and the complete business address of the farm where the produce was grown; AND,
2. Maintain records to prove that the farm meets the qualified exemption status. Records must be updated annually

and retained as long as necessary to support the farm’s eligibility status for the current calendar year. To view and download an example record that meets this requirement visit: go.usa.gov/xdaac.

Will qualified exempt farms undergo routine inspections?

No. Farms that meet both the qualified exemption criteria and the modified requirements are exempt from routine inspections. VAAFM periodically re-verifies qualified exempt farms to ensure those farms continue to be eligible for the exemption and meet the modified requirements.

Qualified Exempt Farm Examples

Examples provided below show instances of when a farm would, and would not, be considered qualified exempt under the Produce Safety Rule.

A diversified vegetable farm that also sells maple syrup

A farm grows and sells a variety of vegetables and also sells maple syrup. The vegetable and maple syrup sales count towards the farm’s total food sales. The farm does not grow or sell any additional food.

Step One: Calculate the farm’s total food sales (vegetables + maple syrup) over the previous three years:

- Year 1 (2017): \$195,000
- Year 2 (2018): \$201,000
- Year 3 (2019): 210,000



- Average total food sales = \$202,000

Of these total food sales, the farm sells 65% of their food products through a farm stand and 35% through a distributor. Because the majority of the sales are to qualified end-users (farm stand customers) AND the farm’s average annual food sales are less than \$500,000, the farm is eligible for the qualified exemption. The farm displays their name and business address at the farm stand and maintains records to prove they are eligible for the qualified exemption.

A poultry farm that also sells apples

A farm raises and sells poultry and grows and sells apples. While the farm primarily sells poultry, the farm also sells an average of \$30,000 in tree fruit, making the farm subject to the Produce Safety Rule. The farm needs to determine if they are covered or qualified exempt under the Produce Safety Rule. The poultry and tree fruit sales count towards the farm’s total food sales.

The farm does not produce or sell any additional food.

Step One: Calculate the farm’s total food sales (poultry + tree fruit) over the previous three years:

- Year 1 (2017): \$560,000
- Year 2 (2018): \$605,000
- Year 3 (2019): \$610,000
- Average total food sales = \$591,666

Because the farm’s average annual food sales exceed \$500,000, the farm is not eligible for a qualified exemption and needs to comply with the full requirements of the Produce Safety Rule.

Who do I contact to determine if my farm is eligible for a qualified exemption?

Produce Program staff can help you determine if your farm is eligible for a qualified exemption from the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. If you have questions about how the FSMA Produce Safety Rule applies to your farm, contact the Vermont Produce Program at AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov or (802) 828-2433.

Vermont Recognizes National Weights and Measures Week

March 1-7, 2020

By Marc Paquette, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

State and local jurisdictions throughout the country are celebrating Weights and Measures Week which takes place the first seven days of March every year. The date for Weights and Measures Week commemorates the signing of the first United States weights and measures law by President John Adams on March 2, 1799. The evolution of a uniform system of weights and measures has had a profound and necessary impact on society and

government. It provides uniformity and confidence in the marketplace for both consumers and businesses. All participants in an economy are more likely to engage openly in trade if they are assured of fairness in transactions. Weights and Measures programs contribute greatly to economic development by promoting equity in the marketplace to all stakeholders.

This year, the Weights & Measures program is highlighting the new Vermont Agriculture & Environmental Laboratory located at the Vermont Technical College campus in Randolph. The Weights and Measures

Metrology Lab is part of this new state of the art facility. This facility will allow the program to offer new services to customers located in the Northeastern part of the country. The new facility has allowed for an expansion of services as the laboratory is now certified for the calibration of large volume provers and test weight carts. The weight carts range from 1,000 to 7,000 lbs. New equipment for this testing include an I-Beam, 10,000 lb. hoist, load cell, and meter. Currently two carts from the state of New Hampshire are scheduled for calibration. These carts, once calibrated,

are used in the field to test commercial vehicle scales used in commerce. The large volume provers are used to test both oil truck and propane truck meters, ensuring the accurate delivery of fuel to customers. The other testing rooms have room for growth and the required environmental controls will meet standards for a higher level of calibration work for the smaller classification of weights.

Weights and Measures metrology lab staff maintain the state standards, conduct calibrations on weighing and measuring artifacts, provide calibration traceability,

and submit annual audits for laboratory certification. Each year the laboratory tests thousands of hydrometers utilized by the maple industry, weights ranging in size from 1,000 lbs. to 0.001 lb. and numerous test measures used in the inspection and calibration of thousands of fuel pumps. After an exhaustive submission process, the Vermont laboratory is very pleased to announce that it was only one of two state metrology laboratories nationwide to receive a two-year Certificate of Traceability from the National Institute

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Preparing for weight cart calibration.



Metrologist Scott Dolan calibrating weight.

Small Farm Business Viability

A Survey of Vermont's Certified Small Farms: Moving Forward

By Mark Cannella, UVM Extension

This is the third article in a series describing results from a 2019 UVM Extension survey of Certified Small Farms (CSFO) in Vermont. This project has provided a sobering view of the current small farm economic challenges. It also demonstrated that over half of small farms are considering both plans to diversify farm enterprises and also considering plans to exit their farm business.

Farmers, business advisers, lenders and community members are operating in the middle of this dilemma. Many farms are not performing economically. We would like to be optimistic that a new enterprise or adjustment can steer the farms back into profitability, but survey results force a reckoning with business models that may no longer be viable. In terms of economics and public perception, Vermont agriculture finds itself in a challenging situation. We want to champion farm diversification and entrepreneurship while knowing that we must also advance a new conversation focused on exit planning.

Farm owners that decide to remain in business must push their creativity and leadership skills to new levels in order to find profitable alternatives. Strategic planning starts by exploring which hat (or hats) are you



interested in, prepared for, and capable of wearing for a new venture. Do you seek to be the producer, marketing expert, customer service specialist or employee supervisor? The feasibility planning process can help determine if the venture will meet their goals. Who will be your key partners? Do you have a mentor or network to learn from? Will the venture require new investments? How long will it take to achieve positive cash flow from operations? Finding value in the marketplace will be a key to survival and success. Good feasibility planning and enterprise analysis will test the viability of the venture on paper first. Feasibility planning can be a major undertaking and it provides the essential research to make sure this new idea can deliver.

For many farms a thoughtful exit plan will be a positive next step. Exit planning is not failure! The benefits can be significant but exit

planning is hard work. I met with a small farm owner in 2017 and they told me, "... going to the barn to milk at 4 a.m. every morning is easy, it's my routine. Meeting with you and making new decisions about this transfer and retirement is the hardest work left for me to do on this farm."

Working proactively on an exit plan enables the farm owner to get more control over the process. Exit plans will seek to dictate the timing of the exit, maximize value from sales, minimize taxes, consider the best new owners and improve benefit for the exiting owners. "Exit plans will seek to dictate the timing of the exit, maximize value from sales, minimize taxes, consider the best new owners and initiate important wealth management decisions."

Farming is not just a way of life; it is an identity. Changing that identity can be one of the scariest and hardest things you will ever do.

Transitioning from the role of farm manager into a different role with different responsibilities to the family and community will be an enormous change. There is a huge amount of uncertainty and fear about not knowing what comes next. However, in the face of mounting financial losses or personal health issues, making a thoughtful exit provides the chance to work towards a positive legacy on your terms.

UVM Extension is part of a statewide Farm Viability Network that specializes in feasibility planning, succession and exit planning. Contact Betsy Miller for more information (Betsy.Miller@uvm.edu)

UVM Extension currently offers business planning programs for farms making water quality improvements. Contact Tony Kitsos for more information (Anthony.Kitsos@uvm.edu)

For More Vermont Agricultural Community Events Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/events/month>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: http://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <http://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of VT Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Required Agricultural Resources (RAPs) Resources: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/rap>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report now available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities



Update on Discussions of Payment for Ecosystem Services in Vermont

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

What do you get when you cross low profit margins from the production of agricultural commodities with increased awareness of the community benefit from good land stewardship practices? In Vermont, the answer might be Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES).

Ecosystem services (ES) are the set of ways that ecosystems, including agricultural landscapes, sustain and fulfill societal needs. For example, a hayfield can provide various ecosystem services such as water filtration and storage, pollinator habitat, and recreational

Example AG Practices	Example Natural Capital	Example Eco Services	Example Benefits
Cover crops	Native perennial vegetation	Reduce floods	Farmer income
Riparian buffers	Healthy soils	Reduce nutrient loss	Flood resilience
Manure incorporation/injection	Functional wetlands	Retain soils	Water quality
Reduced tillage	Floodplains & riparian areas	Sequester carbon	Climate mitigation
Crop rotation		Improve yields	Climate resilience
Existing programs pay for this	We want to invest in this	We want to value these	We want these results

opportunities in addition to feed for livestock. The Soil Conservation and Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group (PES WG), which met five times from September 2019 - January 2020, envisions a “paradigm shift” in which Vermont

farmers are increasingly viewed as environmental stewards and compensated not just for agricultural commodities but also for the ecosystem services that their land and labor provide to the broader community.

The PES WG was convened by the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture as charged by the Vermont Legislature last year and brought together Vermont farmers, including members of the three main farmer watershed groups in Vermont, state and federal agencies and local non-profits to discuss ways to support a robust and comprehensive PES system in Vermont. Perspectives on the details of a potential new PES framework varied widely, but the PES WG and the public in attendance all expressed excitement about the potential initiative.

In an agricultural PES system, public or private funding pays farmers for the provisioning of ecosystem services from

which the public benefits. “Pay-for-practice” PES systems pay farmers for the implementation of conservation practices, with the assumption that societal benefits will follow. Existing state and federal grant systems in Vermont tend to follow this model. Alternatively, “pay-for-performance” PES systems pay farmers for the measured or modelled environmental benefits of their stewardship. Generally, the PES WG supported a “pay-for-performance” PES system that would pay for measurably improved soil health, which they in turn expect to increase carbon sequestration, reduce nutrient runoff and flooding risks to downstream residents.

The PES WG agreed that PES payments should support efforts that go above-and-beyond the existing regulatory requirements and emphasized the importance of being able to measure/

verify the ecosystem services provided and to use those results as the basis for payment. However, the PES WG also recognized that a PES platform should be financially sustainable and that measurement is costly. They further discussed the importance of equity in ensuring access to PES payments across the state, in different farm sizes, and in farms with various levels of current environmental stewardship. Ultimately, the PES WG agreed that these discussions emphasized the necessity for ongoing research and deliberation beyond the short time period they were initially allotted to investigate this issue, and thus hope to continue to further these goals in 2020 and 2021.

For more information about discussions of PES in Vermont and to find the report that the PES WG presented to the Legislature on January 15, 2020, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/pes.

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Villa Villekulla Farm, LLC, of Tunbridge Vermont to process, package, and buy and sell cheese within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by March 31, 2020.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.



2020 Scale Testing

By Marc Paquette, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Consumer Protection Section of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will be hosting multiple scale inspection events around the state during April for anyone who uses a scale, or scales, at farmers’ markets to sell produce or other commodities . This testing is required by law, and the Agency would like to encourage producers to take advantage of these testing dates as they have replaced the Agency’s annual visits to Vermont farmers’ markets . This will allow the Agency

to perform these inspections in a more efficient manner and in a way that creates less disruption to you and the farmers’ markets . Please plan to attend one of the inspection events listed below . Bring your legal for trade scale, and any accessories that you use with it for weighing items for sale. The following is a list of dates and locations for the testing. Most sites will be at Agency of Transportation (AOT) garage sites . Hours for each location will be 9:00am – 3:00pm . You can come anytime during our open hours, and no advance appointment is necessary. The test should take around 10 minutes per scale .

Date	Location	Address
2-April	AOT - Derby	4611 Route 5, Derby
3-April	AOT – St . Johnsbury	1098 US Route 5, St . Johnsbury
8-April	AOT - Chimney Corners, Colchester	Brentwood Drive, Colchester
8-April	AOT - Bradford	57 Fairgrounds Road, Bradford
9-April	AOT – Central Garage	1716 US RT. 302, Berlin
14-April	Agency of Agriculture/Weights & Measures Lab	163 Admin Drive, Randolph Center (VTC)
15-April	AOT - Middlebury	341 Creek Rd., Middlebury
16-April	AOT – Clarendon	1628 Route 7B, Clarendon
21-April	AOT – Dummerston	870 US Route 5, Dummerston
22-April	AOT- Bennington	359 Bowen Road, Bennington
23-April	AOT – Windsor	1640 US Route 5 North, Windsor
28-April	AOT – Morrisville	634 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville
30-April	Agency of Agriculture/Weights & Measures Lab	163 Admin Drive, Randolph Center (VTC)

Look for the scale checking signs. If you have any questions call the Consumer Protection office at: 802-828-2426

Economic Development Plan

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topic areas, and content from over 130 total contributors representing knowledge of industries and issues facing Vermont agriculture . The vision for the plan was to capture what is currently happening in Vermont agriculture and offer actionable recommendations that could influence policy creation, new program development, staff expansion, and funding appropriations to stimulate the agricultural economy over the next five years . The 2020 Vermont Agriculture and Food System Plan includes over 119 recommendations that indicate as many as 21 additional full-

time employees and approximately \$22 .7 million is needed to support and maintain a viable agricultural industry in our state in response to the transitions upon our agricultural working landscape . Many of the recommendations highlighted in the report speak to the need for high-quality business and technical assistance, market development and marketing support, and product research and development as critical areas for investment . Specific industry and market support recommendations that will lead to a more stable, diverse, and revitalized agricultural economy include the following:

- Lead consumer education campaigns that position

maple as a natural sweetener and more than simply a ‘pancake syrup’ .

- Support Vermont’s cheese operations to explore new business models that include workforce development and infrastructure support .
- Intentionally create peer-to-peer learning groups between farmers to share best practices and solutions to management challenges .
- Develop increased production capacity for higher-attribute milk (grass-fed, organic, GMO-free) in response to consumer trends .
- Assist the Vermont apple industry in securing more in-state and regional institutional market accounts .
- Offer business assistance to farmers markets focused

on marketing and professional development, supporting small and emerging agriculture operations.

- Expand business assistance services into more specialized skills targeting businesses across the entire state and all stages of development .
- Invest in more flexible capital options for agriculture businesses in need of resources to support business diversification or expansion .

Now we have to work together to support agricultural producers, expand the business assistance structure, and invest in many of these recommendations over the coming years to implement this economic development plan . To find the 2020 Vermont Agriculture and Food System Plan, visit [https://agriculture .vermont .gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-plan-2020](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-plan-2020)

Join Governor Scott for the annual tapping on Monday, March 9, 2020 beginning at 11:30AM at the Gagne Maple located at 3601 St. Armand Road in Swanton.



The Bittersweet Effects of Invasive *Celastrus orbiculatus*

By Judy Rosovsky,
VT Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets

Asiatic bittersweet, formerly known as Oriental bittersweet and sometimes Chinese bittersweet, Latin name is *Celastrus orbiculatus*, is an introduced vine that was imported from (surprise) Asia. Native to China, Japan and Korea, this plant is listed as a noxious weed in Vermont and Maine, and as such is not for sale; and it is prohibited from sale in NH, NY and MA. Non-native species often have invasive properties – they can grow and reproduce rapidly in a wide range of environmental conditions and often do so at the expense of local species. They are difficult to get rid of due to their growth and their tenacious and easily regrown roots and tend to become the dominant form of vegetation in a given area. Asiatic bittersweet is an attractive plant with bright yellow and orange berries that is a popular ingredient for wreaths and other decorative constructions. It is unfortunate that the sale and distribution of these decorative items helps to move the seeds around and allows the introduced plant to invade and take over new areas and may contribute to the loss of native plants.

There is a related native vine called American bittersweet, *Celastrus scandens*, which has a similar but not as spectacular berries. It too has the vine family's



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



Image from NC State Extension



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

At left: *Celastrus scandens* – American Bittersweet. Center: Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). At right: Oriental Bittersweet vine choking a tree. For help identifying this invasive, please go to <https://www.vtinvasives.org/invasive/bittersweet-asiatic>

propensity to strangle but does not have as aggressive a growth rate as its cousin and does not proliferate like an invasive. The introduced bittersweet outcompetes its American cousin and can hybridize with it. In some areas true American bittersweet plants have become rare as a result of the arrival of the invasive version, and there is a real danger that their genetically distinct identity will be lost through hybridization and their inability to compete.

The two types of bittersweet plants can be told apart from each other because the introduced bittersweet has blunt thorns on the stems, and the berries grow all along the vine, while on the native bittersweet the berries only grow at the tip of the vine. To make matters more confusing, there is another noxious invasive weed called bittersweet, *Solanum dulcamara*, sometimes known as bittersweet nightshade. It is not related

to the Asiatic or American bittersweets. All or parts of each of these three plants are slightly poisonous to people and pets.

So why do we try to regulate this rapidly growing, pretty vine? Like many vines it entwines itself around other shrubs and trees to support itself. It grows rapidly and aggressively and causes physical harm to the plants it climbs on by smothering them or strangling them. It can cut off the flow of both water and nutrients by squeezing the tree trunk and preventing the transfer of materials that the trees need to live. The vines can grow up to 4 inches in diameter. The weight of the invasive vines on local trees and shrubs combined with the weight of ice and snow can cause breakage and uprooting. This introduced species outcompetes native plant species for nutrients and can cause the soil around it to become more alkaline. The invasive form of bittersweet

is abundant in many places in Vermont, and is found in at least 32 other states, but is not in Florida or most of the western states. Due to its twining nature, it can be transported by Christmas trees. As the trees grow in the fields, the vine can twine up into its branches and the vine and seeds go with the tree when it is cut. This is a significant problem, because there are Vermont Christmas tree growers who ship trees to Florida, which does not have or want to have Asiatic bittersweet.

Like many invasive species, Asiatic bittersweet is difficult to get rid of once it has established itself. It can be hand pulled or mechanically removed but care must be taken to get all of the root system, as it can regrow easily. The chemicals Triclopyr and glyphosate have been used on these plants. One researcher (Dreyer) recommended mowing the plants close to the ground, waiting a month, and then applying triclopyr

to the stumps. A combination of techniques can be more successful than just using one method, as these plants are persistent. It can take many years to completely eliminate the weeds, due to their tenacious roots and seed bank. Always make sure that any herbicide you use is registered for use in your state and that you are following the instructions on the label.

One of the best ways to protect uninvaded areas from being overwhelmed by invasive species like this is to help slow the spread of the plants. You can help stop the spread of obnoxious invasive plants by learning to tell introduced species apart from the native species. Nurseries and nursery customers can help by only buying native species of plants. There are many vigilant eyes in Vermont; people who care about our ecosystem and let regulatory officials know when and where noxious weeds are being

continued on page 10



Custom Manure Applicator Certification Review and Exam Dates

By Mary Montour, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and Lindsey Ruhl, UVM Extension

Are you a new full-time custom manure applicator or a new full-time employee of

a custom manure applicator operation? If yes, you need to become certified with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) to operate within the State per the Required Agricultural *continued on page 10*

Custom Manure Applicator Certification Exam Dates, Times, and Locations

March 12*
1:30pm – 2:30pm
American Legion
100 Parah Drive
St. Albans
RSVP by March 10

March 23
2:30pm – 3:30pm
Vermont Technical College
Red Schoolhouse
46 E. Randolph Commons
RSVP by March 21

Springfield
RSVP by March 23

March 26
2:30pm – 3:30pm
Middlebury Extension Office
23 Pond Lane
StMiddlebury
RSVP by March 25

TBD
Newport

**Part of the Farmer's Watershed Alliance Precision Agriculture Forum. It is not required to attend the forum if you only wish to take the exam.*

March 25
3:00pm – 4:00pm
Hartness House
30 Orchard Street



Custom Applicator illustrates manure spreading setback marks in a field before spreading.

By the Numbers

A Look at Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Work in 2019

By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets submits an Annual Report to the Vermont Legislature each year . The following graphics were pulled for the Agency's 2020 Annual Report and speak to just a few of the important programs the Agency runs. The numbers tell some of the important stories behind the work performed by Agency staff, and our state's farmers and agriculture producers. The Annual Report in its entirety can be found at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/files/2020%20Legislative%20Summary%20Final.pdf>.

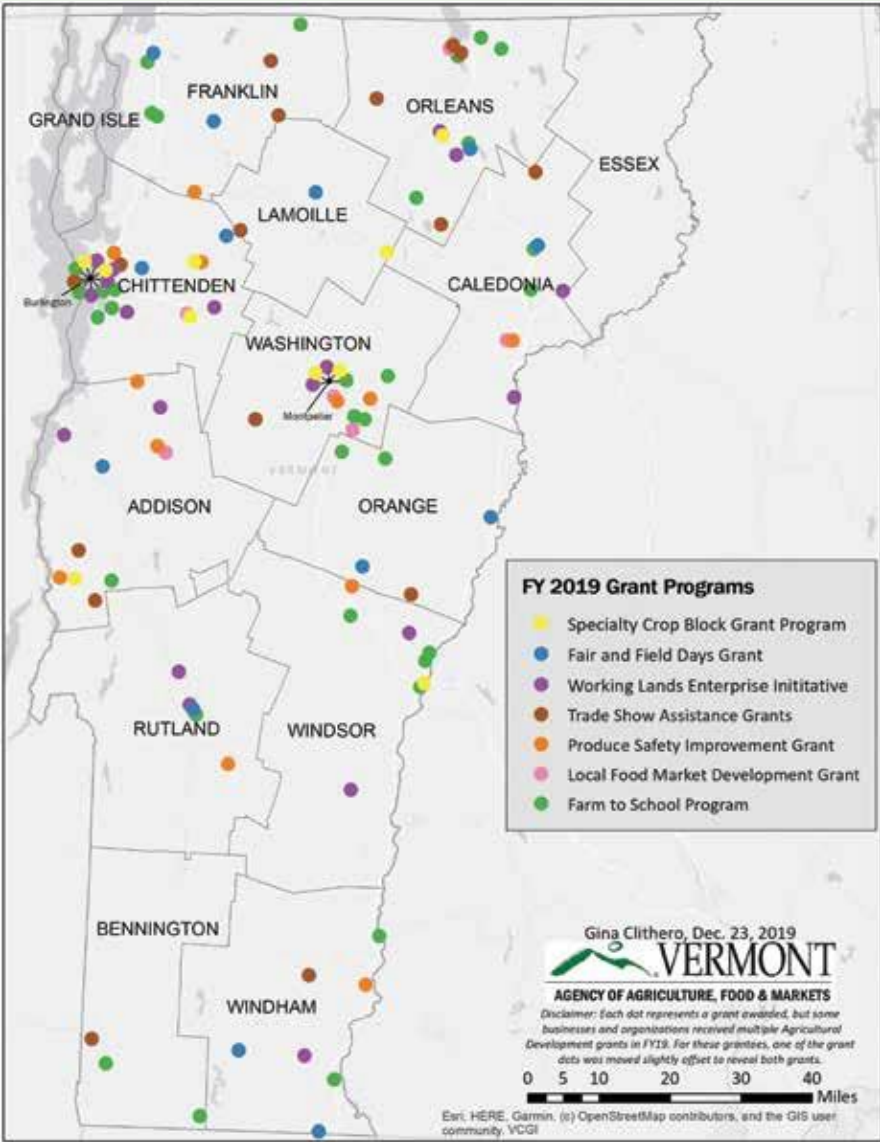
We will be reporting more of these program numbers in Agriview throughout the coming months to familiarize the public with the scope of Agency programs .

The Agency invites you to review the report and looks forward to working with our agricultural community in 2020 .

continued on page 10

Investing in Vermont's Agricultural Economy


Recipients of Agricultural Development Grants and Contracts in Fiscal Year 2019





By the Numbers
continued from page 9

Dairy Section - Regulatory Numbers	
697	Total Dairy Farms
152	Total Dairy Plants
2,150	Dairy Farm Inspections
408	Dairy Plant Inspections
252	Dairy Plant Equipment Tests
31	Enforcement Inspections
783	Milk Sampling Stops
186	Miscellaneous Inspections (Bulk Milk Hauler & Milk Tank Truck)
61	Technical Assistance Visits



Water Quality Division - Financial Assistance	
11,490 Acres.....	Improved Through Funded Practices
85 Practices	Funded & Installed
\$3.7 Million	State Expenditure for Implementation
\$2.5 Million	Federal Expenditure Leverages
Nearly \$1 Million ..	Invested by Vermont Farmers

Meat Inspection - Regulatory Inspection Numbers	
2,909 ...	Daily Slaughter & Processing Inspections
440	Retail Compliance & Enforcement Inspections
51	Custom Slaughter & Processing Inspections
66	Microbiological Sampling
28	Drug & Antibiotic Sampling

Agricultural Development Division – Financial Assistance		
Grant Program	# Recipients	\$ Invested
Farm to School & Childcare grants	33	\$278,700
Fair & Field Days Capital grants	13	\$309,656
Local Food Market Development	6	\$30,000
Produce Safety Improvement grants	12.....	\$56,085
Specialty Crop Block grant	10	\$307,992
Trade Show Assistance grant.....	16	\$32,074
Working Lands Enterprise Initiative	19	\$823,118
Totals.....	109....	\$1,837,625

Bittersweet

continued from page 8

sold . Buying native species is good because natives are more in tune with local ecosystems; they usually provide better nutrition to local wildlife and in this case they cause less damage to

the surrounding plant communities . In addition to the native bittersweet there is another local plant called winterberry, *Ilex verticallata*, which has pretty red (or sometimes orange) berries. Both of these native species can be purchased from nurseries. When you buy native

species or wreaths made with native berries your neighbors will glad that their yards will not be taken over by this unstoppable introduced vine . Ask your local nursery to only sell native plants – Mother Nature and your neighbors will appreciate your efforts .

Custom Manure Applicator

continued from page 9

Practices. To become certified, custom applicators must pass the Custom Manure Applicator Exam . Dates, times, and locations of custom applicator review and exams (review and exam held on the same day) can be found on Page 9 . The exam is 20 multiple choice questions. Certification lasts for five years but must be renewed annually .

Seasonal, part time, or other staff must also be trained in methods or techniques to minimize runoff to surface water when spreading manure . How you demonstrate staff are trained is at your discretion . These review/exam sessions are a great way to train staff. Alternatively, training is available online through the Vermont Custom Manure Applicator Online Training course. Go to <https://campus.extension.org/> to create your free account and take the online course. The online course is not a substitute for certification .

The review and exam are free, but a \$30 certification fee is required to operate for the 2020 season. Please be prepared to pay the certification fee of \$30 at the time of the exam . Make checks payable to VAAFM . Those who attend will receive one custom applicator educational credit .

Please let us know you are coming . If no one signs up, the review and exam session will be cancelled . RSVP to Lindsey Ruhl at (802) 524-6501 or lruhl@uvm.edu .

For questions related to the Custom Manure Applicator Program, contact the Agency at 802-828-2431 .

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802-537-3294

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Bees & Honey

Queens and nucs: This year Singing Cedars Apiary is selling 3# packages @ \$140 each. We also have our regular 5 frame nucs @ \$175. We will have 'ready-to-go' 5 frame nucs @ \$190. All of these require a non-refundable \$40 deposit. Our northern survivor queens are selling \$32 unmarked, \$34 marked. See our website for orders over 10-20 on pricing. These are our hybrid queens from our own stock bred from various strains to breed favorable traits. See our site for more details. We cannot ship queens priority mail outside of New England. Must be express! For more information call 802-948-2057 and go to www.vtbees.com

Cattle

4 year old black angus proven bull for sale. Good bloodlines. Excellent temperament. 2500\$ delivered price. Call 802-558-8196 or 802-265-3078 for more info

12 - 2 month old Holstein heifer calves. \$200 each or make an offer on all. We milk 200 cows and have too many. 802-375-5795

350+ cow and 200+ young stock barn/farm facility available for rent. Complete dairy farm with modern double 10 Boumatic parlor. No livestock included. All buildings have slatted floors, no alley scraping necessary.

Headlocks in all livestock barns, mattresses, curtains, 2 bulk milk tanks. 700 acres of feed for purchase. Rent, buy or will consider raising young stock for other farmers. Let's discuss the possibilities. 802-533-2984

Equipment

Hay elevator - 15 ft, by Snowco, GE motor S-line; 11(eleven) Utility Gates by Tractor Supply (50" high - 4at 8 ft, 5 at 4 ft, 1 -6 ft, 1- 10 ft). One 16 gal heated tub, a 4.5 gal Fortex bucket, and various stock tanks. Call 802-694-1602 or emailbonnehagenfarm@gmail.com.

2 Gehl forage boxes 970 and 980 on heavy running gear, 2 manure spreaders: NI 3932 and Kuhn tandem, Uebler 810 feed cart. I can be reached at 802-230-8525

International 843 4 row narrow combine cornhead; 3250 Reel Auggie Mixer on gas 1995 Ford 450; Used Agway water bowls. Call for prices 802-770-0959

Free old tires, good for farm use only. Call 603-256 8422

3 pt hitch wood splitter, Farming wench, Emphyre Pro Outdoor Wood Furnace, two 550 gal fuel tanks and two 275 gal fuel tanks. 802-746-8979

1949 Farmall H good paint & tires, runs well 802-592-3356

Sled used for gathering sap. Made by Ben Thresher in Barnet. 802-592-3356.

John Deere 4420 4wd combine, 2800 hours, two heads in good shape. \$15,000 phone 802-442-5353.

New Holland 900 Forage Harvester. Excellent condition/field ready. Tandem axles. All tires new or like new. Has been very well maintained and always stored indoors. Metal Alert III, electrical control box. Price \$12,000. Westfield, VT, Orleans County. 802-355-3496. jcouture@maplesyrupvt.net.

1 new 12-4-28 tire. Also, Farmall H good condition - paint & tires. 802-592-3356

Reel Auggie 3250 mixer with scales on F-450 truck; IH 843 4 row narrow corn head; IH 7ft window head off 881 Harvester. Rutland, 802-770-0959

375 gal full tank \$100. CMT bale wrapper \$250. 2 bottom plow \$75. 802-426-3339

3000 gallon mueller bulk tank with 2-5 horsepower compressor. 802-487-4467

1250 gallon bulk tank for sap or storage 802-895-4683

Mueller 500 gallon bulk tank with compressor in good condition \$800 OBO. Pequea model 250 3 pt hitch tractor saw with 30" blade - like new- \$1000 OBO. 3 pt hitch - 4 ft hydraulic log splitter \$1800 OBO 802-893-2262



General

High Tunnel Greenhouse Assembly & Maintenance: Ledgewood, Harnois, Rimol and more. Complete assembly, End Wall Construction, Poly Installation, Renovation, and Repairs. Experienced and Professional. Plan Ahead! Get in touch now to get on the 2020 schedule. Contact Mike Feiner at feinervt@gmail.com, www.vineripe.net, (802) 498-8031.

Hay, Feed & Forage

Quality Canadian hay for sale, big/small squares wrapped, or unwrapped, round bales wrapped or unwrapped, 1st, 2nd, 3rd cuts available. Switch grass and straw available, call Richard at 802-323-3275

Square baled hay - top quality, vof certified organic, generous sized. 1st cut \$4.50/bale, 2nd cut \$5.50/bale at the barn in Barnet. 802-592-3088

2019 1st cut Timothy and clover hay \$5.00 a bale plus delivery fee. Call 603-256-

8422

1000 tons corn silage, processed in Colchester. 50 @ ton 802-272-3478 or 802-223-1370 or email sethgardner@hotmail.com


Addison County

Large squares available in Addison, Vt. Hay is stored under cover. Looks like a long winter ahead of us. Call now and make sure you have enough. Contact S.L. Moore at 802-463-3875.

1st cut 4x5 round bales never wet. Good horse & cow hay. 802-948-2627 or 802-558-0166

Certified organic, small square bales always stacked and stored under cover, 35-40lbs/bale. \$4/bale, discounts available for large quantities. Call 802-989-0781 for inquiries.

Hay for Sale in Addison, VT. Large square bales and small squares. \$50-60 for Large, \$3.50-4.50 for Small. Delivery Available. Call Jack 802-989-8968



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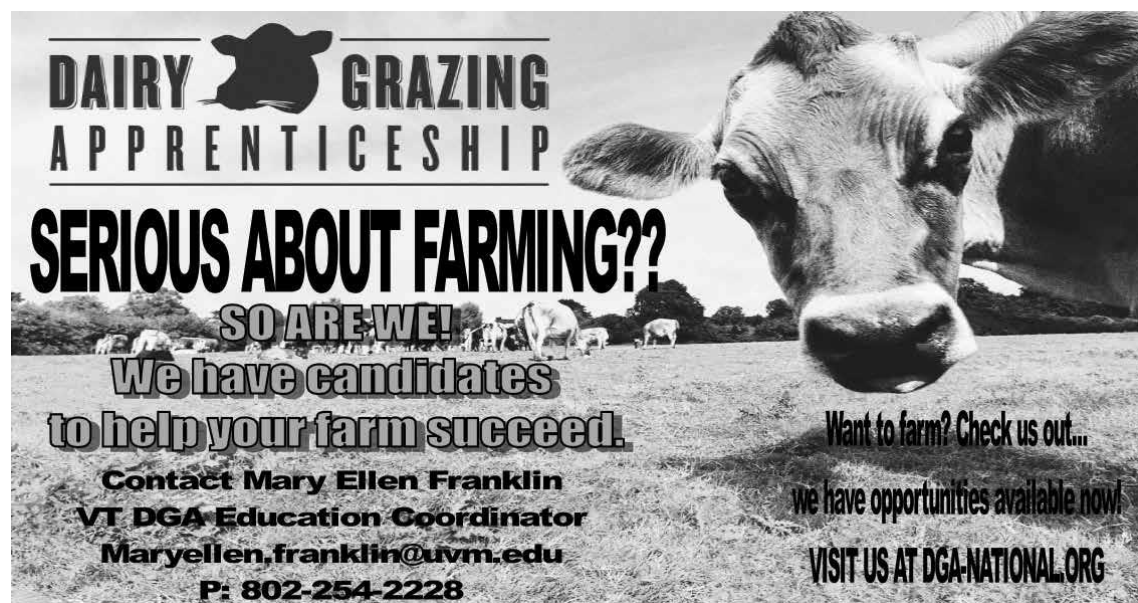
**We have candidates
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VT DGA Education Coordinator
Maryellen.franklin@uvm.edu
P: 802-254-2228

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Hay for sale. \$3.25 bale. 802-377-5455

73 1st cut 5ft diameter round bales. \$30-\$35. Orwell 802-948-2211

Straw for sale - \$7/bale for 50 or more. \$8/bale for less than 50, \$6/bale for all in the barn, approx. 350. from our winter rye harvest in August. Certified organic. Thornhill Farm, Greensboro Bend, 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802.441.3176

benningTon County

Corn Silage 1000 ton plus. Haylage 500 ton plus. Round bales 4x4. Square bales small. 802-394-2976

Caledonia County

Square baled hay- Top quality, VOF certified organic, generous sized. 1st cut \$4.50/bale, 2nd cut \$5.50/bale at the barn in Barnet. 802-592-3088

ChiTTenden County

Round bales for horses. Clean first cut timothy mixed grass, quality net wrapped 4' X 5' bales. Never wet. \$45. each. 802-879-0391 Westford.

15 large 5x5 round bales mixed grass w/some timothy +

clover 800+lbs \$50 ea. Call 899-4126.

Franklin County

Good Quality Hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard & orchard sweet grass 18 to 20% plus protein large bales & organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load on direct delivery by trailer load. Mountain View Dairy Farm, 802-849-6266.

Iamoille County

Organic baled straw. \$5.50/bale. Certified Organic. Valley Dream Farm, Cambridge, Vt. 802-644-6598. email: valleydream@myfairpoint.net.

Orange County

2019 first cut square hay bales for sale. \$4.00 per bale. Delivery available. Bonnie Kennedy, Chelsea, VT. 802-685-2292.

Approximately 375 ton of high quality grass and clover first and second cut, cut extremely early in 2018. First finished May 22, second finished July 2nd. Tests high in energy and protein. 45% harvested "hay in a day" \$50 per ton. Chris 802-522-9485

Orleans County

Pure alfalfa for sale and also 1st, 2nd and 3rd cut big/small squares, round bales, wrapped or unwrapped, straw and switch grass. Call Richard at 802-323-3275.

Organic Certified Silage for Sale: We will deliver from our farm or you can come and pick up. Call for prices and delivery charge. 1-802-744-2444 or 802-274-4934 or 802-744-6553.

2nd & 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale. Call Peter Gebbie 802-533-2984, leave a message.

rutland County

First cut 4x5 round bales. 802-265-4566

Good quality 1st and 2nd round bales available, wrapped and dried please call 802-446-2435.

Washington County

200 - 4x4 round wrapped bales 1st \$45. 802-229-9871.

Windham County

2017 4x4 wrapped baleage 1st & 2nd cutting certified organic good quality \$40 per bale 802-254-6982.

Hay for sale 4x4 wrapped dairy quality at \$45 1st cut square bales, never wet, good horse hay at \$5. 802-387-4412. Livewaterfarm@comcast.net

1st cut 4x5 round bales. Don Pettis, 802-265-4566.

2018 4X4 wrapped baleage. June cut. Certified organic, never wet. \$40.00 per bale, quantity discount. 802-254-6982.

1st cut hay. Good horse hay. \$4.50 bale. 802-254-5069.

Windsor County

HAY FOR SALE-100 Square Bales, Reading, Windsor County VT. \$3.50 per bale at the barn. Call 802-484-7240.

4x5 dry round bales \$45.00 delivery available. 802-457-1376.

Rolling Meadows Farm: square bales in the field or barn \$4.00. Delivery can be arranged at \$5.50. Very nice hay from fertilized fields in

the South Woodstock and Reading area. Call 802-484-5540 or goodfarmvt@gmail.com. Ask for David.

1st. cut dry round bales for sale. Never been rained on, stored under cover. \$50. @ 1st. cut haylage bales for sale. \$45. Rte. 5, Weathersfield Bow 802-546-4340.

Dry round horse hay, \$50/bale. 200 bales left. 802-356-5030.

Wanted

Kuhn FC350GMower or will sell mine for parts 802-728-3760

Employment

High-Tunnel/Hoophouse/Greenhouse Construction - Spring 2020 - Building season runs roughly April - November throughout Vermont and across New England. Candidate is ideally located in the Central VT/Mad River Valley/Northfield/Roxbury/Randolph/Montpelier area. Dependable, punctual, flexible, detail oriented, hardworking skilled workers only. Good pay for the right person. Go to www.vineripe.net/employment for more information.

Farm & Farmland

For Lease: 10 acres of organic meadow in Brandon, currently in alfalfa. Producing roughly 12-15 tons per year in dry hay. Three year lease available, price negotiable but approximately \$600/yr 802-247-8459

Horse Training Farm: 17 plus acres with X-C obstacles, galloping track, stadium jumps, full size ring, covered small arena, trails. 3 stall stable with paddocks, tack/feed room, hay storage. 4 pastures have board fencing. Open concept cape farmhouse has 3 bedrooms, office, sun room, deck, fiber optic internet, solar, 2 car detached garage. Workshop, equipment storage, chicken house, gardens, orchard, stream, woods, views. Convenient to Dartmouth College and DH Medical Center. Comes "turn key, as is." \$675,000. 802-785-4410.

Opportunity for Barn Lease in Williston Summer 2020: Well maintained farm residence with equine barn, stalls, and pasture for up to four animals. Call Robin at 802-434-2788 for details.

350+ cow and 200+ young stock barn/farm facility available for rent. Complete dairy farm with modern double 10 Boumatic parlor. No livestock included. All buildings have slatted floors, no alley scraping necessary. Headlocks in all livestock barns, mattresses, curtains, 2 bulk tanks. 700 acres of feed for purchase. Rent, buy or will consider raising young stock for other farmers. Let's discuss the possibilities. Greensboro, VT, 802-533-2984

Sixth Annual Vermont Open Farm Week

Open Farm Week is a celebration of Vermont farms offering visitors a backstage pass to learn more about local food origins, authentic agritourism experiences, and the chance to build relationships with farmers. This year's Open Farm Week will return the week of Monday, August 10th through Sunday, August 16th, 2020 — please save the date!

Farms all over the state will be hosting special events during this week, some just for one day and others for several days or all throughout the week. Registration for farms, sign-up for technical assistance, scheduling, timeline, and additional event information can be found at <https://www.diginvt.com/blog/openfarmweekforfarmers/>



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Nomination accepted from March 15 – May 1

Since its founding in 2003, more than seventy-five Vermonters have been inducted into the Vermont Hall of Fame . Inductees are honored each year at a luncheon hosted during the Champlain Valley Fair .

Best Management Practices Program Applications for Financial Assistance Due April 1, 2020

Visit <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/bmp> for more information on the BMP Program or to print an application. If you have any questions, or to request a BMP application by mail please call 802-828-2431.

Hydrometer Testing at Maple Meetings in January

By Kyle Harris, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Over three weekends in January, the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets attended and conducted on-site hydrometer testing at Maple Conferences hosted throughout the state by The University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association. The conferences, located in Middlebury, Brattleboro, and Hyde Park, saw Agency staff test over 140 hydrometers belonging to maple producers to ensure that hydrometers are in



Left: Kyle Harris, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets testing hydrometer for compliance with Vermont regulation. At right, Sugarmakers wait to have their hydrometers inspected to ensure compliance with Vermont regulations.

compliance with Vermont Maple Laws and Regulations.

This courtesy service was not designed to calibrate hydrometers, but rather to let producers know if their hydrometers were

still in compliance as we look toward the 2020 sugaring season. However, the Vermont Metrology Laboratory, which maintains the official mass, volume, and hydrometry standards for

the State of Vermont, provides assistance to the public sector and will calibrate hydrometers to ensure accuracy in the production and testing of maple syrup.

More information can be

found by visiting Agency's website, <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/food-safety-consumer-protection-0/weights-measures/metrology-lab>

2020 Vermont Farm Show Gives a Glimpse of the Future

By Scott Waterman, VAAFM Director of Communications & Policy

When the Agency promoted its presence at the 2020 Vermont Farm Show, the hope was that folks would stop by and chat with us about their concerns and issues. Well this year there was one topic that got folks to our booth: hemp!

From multiple people stopping by the Agency booth to 30 attendees at a Hemp Program Q&A session on day two, hemp was the dominant conversation. In 2019, the number of acres planted for hemp grew in Vermont by 170%. This trend will likely continue going forward, redefining the agricultural landscape in Vermont for many years to come.

Dairy, water quality, produce and Act 250 were among many of the other topics that were also high on the list of conversations at the Farm Show. We look forward to more conversations at next year's Farm Show, but we are always available the rest of the year at www.agriculture.vermont.gov when needed!



Agency staff Mike DiTomasso & Stephanie Smith lead the Q & A session on hemp during the Farm Show.

Glass is Half Full

Half of Milk Category Showing Strong Growth

By Laura Hardie,
New England Dairy

At first glance plant-based beverages seem to be taking over the dairy case and sales from milk. Yet, that isn't the full picture said Adam Landau, Senior Vice President of Marketing Partnerships at Dairy Management, Inc (DMI).

Landau spoke with over 200 dairy farmers and industry members about fluid milk sales and innovation at the Dairy Farmer Appreciation Banquet at the Vermont Farm Show on Thursday January 23, in partnership with local dairy check-off organization, New England Dairy. "First and foremost, I want you to know real dairy milk is still a powerhouse at retail," Landau said. "94 percent of U.S. households buy milk – that's 117 million homes. Or, to flip it, there are only 7 million households that don't buy milk."

According to market research firm IRI, plant-based beverages are a much smaller category than milk with \$2 billion a year in sales, compared to milk's annual sales of \$13.8 billion. Over half of the people who buy milk do not buy plant-based beverages, and approximately 40 percent buy both milk and a plant-based beverage.

IRI data shows that the real competitor to milk is water and coffee. Fifty-three percent of white milk switching losses are from bottled water, and 11 percent is from switching to coffee. Landau said there is



Adam Landau, Senior Vice President of Marketing Partnerships at Dairy Management Inc spoke to 200 farms at the Dairy Farmer Appreciation Banquet during the Farm Show.

an opportunity to re-engage with these consumers with the beverages they want.

Landau explained that about half of the milk category is showing sustained, long-term growth. In 2019, whole milk sales in New England were up 1.4 percent, representing 40 percent of white milk sales in the region.

"The data and research around the benefits of whole dairy fat continues to impact sales of whole milk. Whole milk sales are growing and now exceed sales of two-percent milk in New England and nationally," Landau said.

Landau stressed that consumers want variety and options. Over 600 new beverages were introduced at retail in the last five years, and that means the beverage industry is more competitive.

Landau said flavored milk has seen long-term growth; satisfying a key consumer

need around indulgence and variety. Most households that buy flavored milk buy white milk as well (over 90 percent). Lactose free milk is also a growth opportunity, with sales up 10.8 percent in 2019 in New England.

"Over a quarter of consumers self-identify as having

digestive issues from lactose. In addition, U.S. consumer demographics are shifting, with population growth among consumers with higher incidences of lactose intolerance," Landau said. "This is leading to tremendous growth in lactose-free milk; we've seen double-digit growth each year for the past five years, and there's no indication of a slowdown."

DMI is investing in research to help drive further growth in fluid milk. The research helps key industry players, including brands, retailers and processors to understand the global consumer, where growth is occurring, what beverage occasions to capture, and how to talk about milk today.

"First, we recognized that there wasn't innovation in packaging and products to engage the consumer, and so we partnered with eight companies to stimulate investment using our research," Landau said. "These companies to date

have launched more than 1.3 billion pounds in cumulative new product sales, with fairlife® leading the way."

Beyond retail, work also is being done to increase fluid milk sales in the food-service industry. Landau said DMI assisted McDonald's with the development and relaunch of the McCafé® line. Ninety percent of McCafé beverages contain dairy, and products such as lattes have more than 70 percent milk. Support from dairy checkoff food scientists also helped McDonald's produce a reduced-sugar, low-fat chocolate milk that was unveiled nationwide in January. The new formulation has 25 percent less sugar than McDonald's previous chocolate milk and is no longer a fat-free product.

Visit Dairy.org/Resources or NewEnglandDairy.com to learn more about national and local dairy promotion, or email info@NewEnglandDairy.com.

Weights & Measures *continued from page 4*

of Standards and Technology for recognition of its calibration work. This certification will allow the work done in the Vermont laboratory to be recognized throughout the country. Many out-of-state companies utilize the Vermont laboratory for calibration of field standards used in industry.

The work the laboratory does also supports the Vermont Weights &

Measures inspection program. Inspectors work diligently to ensure accurate and correct devices are used for sales of goods and services to consumers. Staff inspect and test all types of scales, gas station pumps, meters on both oil and propane trucks, packages, and conduct price verification inspections (scanners) in grocery stores.

Weights and Measures Week serves as a reminder of the great value consumers receive from weights and measures programs. The next

time you purchase gas, take a trip to the grocery store, or receive a delivery of fuel at your home, remember that dedicated staff from the Weights and Measures Program is working hard to ensure accuracy, fairness, and protection to all.

For more information about the Agency of Agriculture's Weights and Measures program, contact Marc Paquette, Weights and Measures Chief, by email at marc.paquette@vermont.gov or by phone 802-828-2426.



Agency staff won the coveted Capital Cook-Off at Consumer Night on Wednesday, January 29th. From right to left, Amer Suvalic, Lynn Ellen Schimoler, Matt Gardner, Hunter Thompson and in front, Addysen Bartlett from Milton Schools

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